



Research Library

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Updated July 6, 2023
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Little Falls, New York Business and Legal Papers, Mss. C64-4

Call Number: Mss. C64-4
Creator: John Porteous, Phyn & Ellice, and others
Title: Little Falls, New York Business and Legal Papers
Date(s): 1764-1862
Language(s): English
Location: Manuscript room
Size: 24 boxes, 1 bound volumes (12 linear ft.)

Acquisition Information: Unknown ; Subseries P found in A00-723.

Donors: Phyn & Ellice papers donated by John T. Hudson; John Porteous papers donated by Henry Howland, who got them from Andrew Langdon, ca. 1901.

Restrictions: None

Preferred Citation: Buffalo History Museum Research Library, C64-4, Little Falls New York Business and Legal Papers.

Processing Information: Collection was created in 1993 by merging and reprocessing the John Porteous papers and the Phyn & Ellice papers. Finding aid digitized by Amy Miller, 2014.

Notes: See also:

M65-1, Papers of John Porteous: a trader and merchant at Detroit and Michillimacinac [sic] 1765-1775 and later at New York and Little Falls, N.Y., 1778-1799. Microfilmed in 1960 before the merger of the two collections.

A00-691, George Dean and John Porteous Privateer's Commission.

Collection Access: Researchers wishing to access this collection must apply for a [Scholar Pass](#) and present valid photo ID upon arrival to the library.

Biographical / Historical Note: John Porteous came to America from Perth, Scotland about the year 1761. He was one of the early British traders at Detroit and Michilimackinac, establishing the Partnership of Duncan, Sterling, and Porteous, and later an association with the merchants James Phyn and Alexander Ellice of Schenectady. He was a resident of Detroit during the siege of Pontiac. Before the outbreak of the American Revolution he went to Montreal. As a loyalist, he went to New York City after its occupation by the British, and carried on a merchandising business there until its evacuation in 1783, when he returned to Scotland. During the Revolution he was one of the owners of the British privateer, Vengeance (formerly the snow Elegante). After the Revolution he took up residence in Nova Scotia; and in 1788 or 1789 he went to Little Falls, New York, where he operated a flouring mill and a trading business and represented the interests of Alexander Ellice, who had succeeded to the lands covered by the Vaughan patent. He was naturalized in 1790, and lived at Little Falls in the Mohawk Valley until his death in March 1799.

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists of papers of and relating to John Porteous, together with some papers of his successors in the enterprises at Little Falls until 1862. These papers include, but are not limited to, correspondence, petitions, business agreements, bonds, legal documents, promissory notes, orders, accounts, receipts and licenses.

Arrangement: Organized into eleven series:

- I. John Porteous, 1764-1802.
 - II. James Porteous, 1767-1779.
 - III. Phyn and Ellice, 1767-1812.
 - IV. William Alexander, 1793-1833.
 - V. William Girvan, 1812-1829.
 - VI. Henry P. Alexander, 1821-1862.
 - VII. Dudley Burwell, 1822-1843.
 - VIII. Adam Fralick, 1855-1857.
 - IX. Miscellaneous correspondence and receipts, 1776-1851.
 - X. Little Falls, N.Y. records, 1810-1834.
 - XI. Herkimer County Democratic-Republican Young Men, 1834.
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Subject Headings:

Agreements.	Herkimer County (N.Y.).
Alexander, Henry P., (Henry Porteous), 1801-1867.	Howland, Henry R. (Henry Raymond), 1844-1930.
Alexander, William.	Legal petitions.
Bonds (financial records).	Little Falls (N.Y.).
Burwell, Dudley.	Mohawk Turnpike and Bridge Company.
Constable, James.	Phyn, Ellice and Company.
Constable, William.	Phyn, James.
Correspondence.	Porteous, James, d. 1780.
Court Records New York (State) 18th century.	Porteous, John, d. 1799.
Court Records New York (State) 19th century.	Powers of attorney.
Ellice, Alexander.	Promissory notes.
Ellice, James.	Real property New York (State).
Fralick, Adam.	Republican Young Men of the State of New York.
Fur trade New York (State).	Convention (1828 : Herkimer).
Girvan, William.	United States History Civil War, 1861-1865.
Guardianship.	Western Inland Lock Navigation Company.

Series Description:

I. John Porteous, 1764-1802, Boxes 1-13

- Subseries A: Correspondence, 1777-1799
- Subseries B: Petitions, 1795-1798
- Subseries C: Business agreements, 1772-1799
- Subseries D: Powers of attorney, 1780-1799
- Subseries E: Bonds, 1793-1799
- Subseries F: Court documents, 1791-1799, and undated
- Subseries G: Land records, 1770-1799, and undated
- Subseries H: Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, 1792-1798
- Subseries I: Promissory notes, 1789-1799, and undated
- Subseries J: Orders, accounts, receipts, 1771-1799, and undated
- Subseries K: Prescriptions and receipts, 1791-1799, and undated
- Subseries L: Miscellaneous, 1787-1799

Subseries M: John Porteous estate, 1799-1802

Subseries N: Henry Howland compilations of Porteous papers, 1764-1798

Subseries O: Old Ship papers, 1780-1784

Subseries P: Correspondence, addendum, 1787-1793

II. James Porteous, 1767-1779, Box 13

III. Phyn and Ellice, 1767-1812, Boxes 13-14

Subseries A: Alexander Ellice, 1789-1812

Subseries B: James Ellice, 1787-1788

Subseries C: James Phyn, 1767-1778

Subseries D: Phyn, Ellice & Co., 1767-1790

IV. William Alexander, 1793-1833, Boxes 14-16

Subseries A: Correspondence, 1794-1811

Subseries B: Legal papers, 1799-1810

Subseries C: Mohawk Turnpike & Bridge Company, 1805-1812

Subseries D: Promissory notes, 1800-1812

Subseries E: Orders, accounts and receipts, 1793-1812, and undated

Subseries F: Miscellaneous, 1799-1805, and undated

Subseries G: William Alexander estate, 1808-1833

Subseries H: Alexander family papers, 1795-180

V. William Girvan, 1812-1829, Boxes 16-19

Subseries A: Letters received, 1825-1829

Subseries B: Alexander children guardianship papers, 1815

Subseries C: Orders, accounts, notes and receipts, 1813-1828, and undated

VI. Henry P. Alexander, 1821-1862, Boxes 19-20

Subseries A: Correspondence, 1826-1851, and undated

Subseries B: Agreements and license, 1828-1838

Subseries C: Promissory notes, 1833-1838, and undated

Subseries D: Orders, accounts and receipts, 1821-1854, and undated

Subseries E: Civil War records, 1862

VII. Dudley Burwell, 1822-1843, Boxes 20-23

Subseries A: General correspondence, 1826-1833, and undated

Subseries B: Correspondence regarding legal cases, 1826-1836, and undated

Subseries C: Legal case files, 1822-1843

VII. Adam Fralick, 1855-1857, Box 24

Subseries A: Correspondence, 1856-1857

Subseries B: Orders, accounts and receipts, 1855-1857, and undated

IX. Miscellaneous correspondence and receipts, 1776-1851, Box 24

X. Little Falls, N.Y. records, 1810-1834, Box 24

XI. Herkimer County Democratic-Republican Young Men, 1834, Box 24

Box and Folder List

Box 1

I. John Porteous

Porteous Subseries A: Correspondence

Porteous Letters received

Folder	1: 1777-1779	7: July-Dec. 1790
	2: 1780-1781	8: Jan.-June 1791
	3: 1782-1785	9: July-Dec. 1791
	4: 1786-1788	10: Jan.-Apr. 1792
	5: 1789	11: May-Aug. 1792
	6: Jan.-June 1790	12: Sept.-Oct. 1792

Box 2

Folder	1: Jan.-Apr. 1793	7: Apr.-May 1795
	2: May-Aug. 1793	8: June-July 1795
	3: Sept.-Dec. 1793	9: Aug.-Dec. 1795
	4: Jan.-June 1794	10: Jan.-Apr. 1796
	5: July-Dec. 1794	11: May-July 1796
	6: Jan.-Mar. 1795	12: Aug.-Dec. 1796

Box 3

Folder	1: Jan.-Apr. 1797	8: William Alexander, 1797
	2: May-Dec. 1797	9: William Alexander, 1798
	3: Jan.-June 1798	10: William and James Constable, 1784-1786
	4: July-Dec. 1798	11: William and James Constable, 1787-1789
	5: 1799	12: William and James Constable, 1790
	6: Alex Alexander, 1790-1795	13: William and James Constable, Jan.-June 1791
	7: William Alexander, 1792-1796	14: William and James Constable, July-Dec. 1791

Box 4

Folder	1: William and James Constable, Jan.-May 1792
	2: William and James Constable, June-Dec. 1792
	3: William and James Constable, 1796-1798
	4: Alexander Ellice, 1790-1792
	5: Alexander Ellice, 1793-1794
	6: Alexander Ellice, 1795-1799
	7: James and Joseph Inglis, 1785-1791
	8: James Murdock, 1791-1799
	9: George and James Phyn, 1793, 1798
	10: Phyn & Ellice, 1786-1787
	11: Phyn, Ellice & Inglis, 1788-1790
	12: Phyn, Ellice & Inglis, 1791
	13: Phyn, Ellice & Inglis, 1792
	14: Phyn, Ellice & Inglis, 1793
	15: Phyn, Ellice & Inglis, 1794-1796
	16 Edward Pollard, 1781-1795

Box 5

Folder	1: Abraham Van Eps, 1791-Feb. 1793
	2: Abraham Van Eps, May 1793-1796

Porteous Letters sent

Folder	3: 1780-1789
	4: 1791-1795
	5: 1796-1797
	6: 1798 and undated

Porteous Family correspondence

Folder	7: 1794-1798
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Porteous Subseries B: Petitions

Folder 8: 1795-1798

Porteous Subseries C: Business agreements

Folder 9: 1772-1790
10: 1791-1793
11: 1794
12: 1795
13: 1796
14: 1797
15: 1798-1799

Porteous Subseries D: Powers of attorney

Folder 16: 1780-1799

Porteous Subseries E: Bonds

Folder 17: 1793-1799

Box 6

Porteous Subseries F: Court documents

Folder 1: 1792-1799, and undated

Porteous Subseries G: Land records

Folder 2: 1770-1773
3: 1780-1789
4: 1790-1791
5: 1792
6: 1793-1795
7: 1796-1797
8: 1798-1799
9: Undated
10: Undated

Porteous Subseries H: Western Inland Lock Navigation Company

Folder 11: Correspondence and agreements, 1792-1797
12: Accounts and payrolls, 1793-1798

Folder 13: 1789-1793
14: 1794-1795
15: 1796-1799, and undated

Box 10

Folder	1: Oct. 1793	7: May-June 1795
	2: Nov.-Dec. 1793	8: July-Aug. 1795
	3: Jan.-June 1794	9: Sept.-Dec. 1795
	4: July-Oct. 1794	10: Jan.-May 1796
	5: Nov.-Dec. 1794	11: June-Aug. 1796
	6: Jan.-Apr. 1795	12: Sept.-Dec. 1796

Box 11

Folder	1: 1797	7: Undated
	2: Jan.-May 1798	8: Undated
	3: June-Dec. 1798	9: Undated
	4: 1799	10: Undated
	5: Undated	11: Undated
	6: Undated	

Box 12

Folder	1: Accounts and receipts for daughters, 1787-1795
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Porteous Subseries K: Prescriptions and receipts

Folder	2: 1797-1799, and undated
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Porteous Subseries L: Miscellaneous

Folder	3: Building plans, Huron dictionary, poems and other papers, ca. 1787-1799
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Porteous Subseries M: John Porteous estate

Folder	4: Feb.-Aug. 1799
	5: Sept.-Dec. 1799
	6: Jan.-Mar. 1800
	7: Apr.-Dec. 1800
	8: 1801-1802

Porteous Subseries N: Henry Howland compilations of Porteous papers

Volume 1: "A portion of the papers of John Porteous, trader and merchant at Detroit and Michilimackinac, 1765-1775, and later at New York and Little Falls, N.Y., 1778-1799, collected by Henry R. Howland, Buffalo, N.Y.," 1764-1798. Includes ship-building contracts, 1769-1770. Unboxed.

Box 13

Volume 2: *A British privateer in the American Revolution* and *Robert Hamilton, founder of Queenston*, by Henry R. Howland. Includes Porteous papers upon which Howland based his research, 1777-1797.

Folder 1: John Porteous by Henry R. Howland.

Porteous Subseries O: Old Ship papers

Folder 2: Old Ship papers, 1780-1784

Porteous Subseries P: Correspondence, addendum

Folder 3: Correspondence, 1787-1793

II. James Porteous

Folder 4: Correspondence, accounts, a bond and instructions for barracks masters, 1767-1779
5: Forts Oswegatchie and William Augustus barracks returns and receipts, 1767-1773

III. Phyn and Ellice

Phyn and Ellice Subseries A: Alexander Ellice

Folder 6: Correspondence, 1789-1791
7: Petitions, agreements and mortgages, 1790-1805
8: Accounts and receipts, 1791-1812

Box 14

Phyn and Ellice Subseries B: James Ellice

Folder 1: Agreement and probate of will, 1787-1788

Phyn and Ellice Subseries C: James Phyn

Folder 2: Correspondence and promissory note, 1767-1778

Phyn and Ellice Subseries D: Phyn, Ellice & Co.

Folder 3: Letters received, 1775-1789

4: Accounts and business agreement, 1772-1790

IV. William Alexander

Letters received

Folder 5: 1794-1796

6: 1797-1798

7: 1799

8: 1800

9: 1801

10: 1802-1804

11: 1805-1809

12: 1810-1812, undated

13: Alexander Ellice, 1799-1804

14: James Murdock, 1799-1811

15: John Richardson, 1800-1803

Letters sent

Folder 16: 1799-1812

17: James Murdock, 1799-1807

Box 14A

Volume 1: Phyn and Ellice Letter book no. 1, November 30, 1767-September 6, 1771

Box 14B

Volume 2: Phyn and Ellice Letter book no. 2, September 7, 1771-July 28, 1773

Box 14C

Volume 3: Phyn and Ellice Letter book no. 3, August 12, 1773-July 15, 1776

Box 15

Alexander Family correspondence

- Folder 1: Catherine Porteous Alexander, 1796-1806
2: Robert Alexander, 1796-1807
Mary Alexander, 1804-1807
3: Other family members, 1793-1803

William Alexander Subseries B: Legal papers

- Folder 4: Agreements, mortgages, bonds and powers of attorney, 1799-1810

William Alexander Subseries C: Mohawk Turnpike & Bridge Company

- Folder 5: Petitions and accounts, 1805-1812

William Alexander Subseries D: Promissory notes

- Folder 6: 1800-1808 7: 1809-1812

S William Alexander Subseries E: Orders, accounts and receipts

- Folder 8: 1793-1799 11: 1804-1808
9: 1800-1801 12: 1809-1812, and undated
10: 1802-1803

William Alexander Subseries F: Miscellaneous

- Folder 13: Plot plans, plan of a tobacco press and other papers, 1799-1805, and undated

William Alexander Subseries G: William Alexander estate

- Folder 14: 1808-1813
15: 1814
16: 1815-1833

Box 16

William Alexander Subseries H: Alexander family papers

- Folder 1: Robert Alexander bonds, leases, accounts and receipts, 1804-1809
2: Alexander, John, Mary and Thomas Alexander letters received, agreements, inventories and accounts
1795-1809

V. William Girvan

William Girvan Subseries A: Letters received

Folder 3: 1825
4: Jan.-Mar. 1826
5: Apr.-June 1826
6: July-Oct. 1826
7: Nov. 1826
8: Dec. 1826
9: Jan.-May 1827
10: June-Dec. 1827
11: 1828-1829

William Girvan Subseries B: Alexander children guardianship papers

Folder 12: Appointment of William Girvan as guardian to Porteous, Jane, William G. and Henry P. Alexander, 1815

William Girvan Subseries C: Orders, accounts, notes and receipts

Folder 13: 1813-1817
14: 1818
15: 1819
16: 1820
17: Distillery accounts, 1820-1821

Box 17

Folder 1: Jan.-May 1821	7: 1824
2: June-Dec. 1827	8: Jan.-Mar. 1825
3: Jan.-Apr. 1822	9: Apr.-May 1825
4: May-Dec. 1822	10: June 1825
5: Jan.-Oct. 1826	11: July-Sept. 1825
6: Nov.-Dec. 1823	12: Oct.-Dec. 1825

Box 18

Folder 1: Jan. 1826	9: Oct. 1826
2: Feb.-Mar. 1826	10: Nov. 1-13, 1826
3: Apr. 1826	11: Nov. 14-30, 1826

4: May 1826	12: Dec. 1826
5: June 1826	13: Jan.-Apr. 1827
6: July 1826	14: May 1827
7: Aug. 1826	15: June-Sept. 1827
8: Sept. 1826	16: Oct.-Dec. 1827

Box 19

Folder 1: 1828
 2: Undated
 3: Undated
 4: Undated
 5: Inventories, Undated

VI. Henry P. Alexander

Henry P. Alexander Subseries A: Correspondence

Folder 6: Letters received, 1826-1827
 7: Letters received, 1828-1837. 1851
 8: Letters sent, 1849, and undated

Henry P. Alexander Subseries B: Agreements and license

Folder 9: Lease agreements and license to sell liquor, 1828-1838

Henry P. Alexander Subseries C: Promissory notes

Folder 10: 1833-1834 12: 1836-1838, and undated
 11: 1835

Henry P. Alexander Subseries D: Orders, accounts and receipts

Folder 13: 1821-1825 17: June-Aug. 1827
 14: 1826 18: Sept.-Oct. 1827
 15: Jan.-Apr. 1827 19: Nov.-Dec. 1827

Box 20

Folder 1: 1828
 2: 1829-1854
 3: Undated

Henry P. Alexander Subseries E: Civil War records

Folder 4: Bounty receipts and volunteer enlistments, Herkimer County, 1862

VII. Dudley Burwell

Dudley Burwell Subseries A: General correspondence

Folder 5: 1826-1831

6: 1832-1833, and undated

Dudley Burwell Subseries B: Correspondence regarding legal cases

Folder 7: 1826

8: 1827

9: 1828

10: 1829

11: 1832-1833

12: Jan.-May 1834

13: June-Dec. 1834

Box 21

Folder 1: 1835-1836

2: Undated

Dudley Burwell Subseries C: Legal case files

Folder 3: Henry P. Alexander vs. Thomas H. Alexander, et. al., 1832

4: Backus vs. Chadderton & Haines, 1830-1831

5: Bartow - various cases, 1828-1832

6: Bellinger vs. Bellinger, 1830-1835

7: Charles Bradley estate, 1824-1830

8: Phineas Briggs petition, 1826-1831

9: Chapman vs. Pinney, 1827-1828

10: Dygert vs. Crane, 1827-1829

11: Garbor vs. Leavitt, 1828-1830

12: William Girvan vs. Richard Petrie, 1825-1830

13: William Girvan - various cases, 1822-1828

14: Gleason vs. Foster, 1833

15: Haile vs. DeWitt, 1831-1834

16: Hall vs. McKinster, Sprague & Dann, 1827

Box 22

- Folder
- 1: Herkimer County Bank vs. Wright & Kilbourn, 1834
 - 2: Elijah Holmes vs. Thomas Hall, 1826-1828
 - 3: Johnson vs. Pinney, 1828-1831
 - 4: Peter Klock petition, 1823
 - 5: Lee, Powell & Lee vs. Sprague, Dann & McKinster, 1827-1831
 - 6: Samuel Look vs. Benjamin Woolener, 1830; Samuel Look vs. Thomas Comstock, 1830
 - 7: David Petrie - various cases, 1826-1830
 - 8: George Petrie - various cases, 1826-1829
 - 9: Jackson, Eyseman vs. Moses Petrie, 1826-1829
 - 10: William Champlin vs. Richard Petrie, 1826-1830
 - 11: Richard Petrie - various cases, 1828-1836
 - 12: Ralston vs. Teeter, Ford & Gillet, 1826-1827
 - 13: Robb & Stephens vs. Hosiash Hamilton, 1828-1829
 - 14: Schuyler vs. Delenbach, 1829
 - 15: David Sprague vs. George Allen, 1827; David Sprague vs. Montgomery R.. Bartlett, 1827-1828
 - 16: David Sprague & David Case vs. Gordon Bradley, 1827-1828
 - 17: David Sprague vs. Robert Bruce, 1828; David Sprague vs. David Case, 1826-1828
 - 18: David Sprague vs. Tenas Crane, 1826-1827
 - 19: David Sprague vs. Samuel Ethridge, 1828; David Sprague vs. John D. Hall, 1827-1829
 - 20: David Sprague vs. John D. Hall
 - 21: David Sprague vs. Walter Martin, 1827
 - 22: David Sprague vs. Ichabod & Abraham Prall, 1826-1827
 - 23: David Sprague vs. John Thrall, 1826-1827
 - 24: Sprague & Dann vs. Trotter & Douglas, 1827
 - 25: David Sprague, Ezra Sprague vs. Burr Wakeman, 1827
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Box 23

- Folder
- 1: David Sprague – various cases, 1816-1834
 - 2: Ten Eyck vs. Burton, 1830-1835
 - 3: Van Landt vs. Sprague & Dann, 1828; Van Landt vs. McKinster, 1828
 - 4: Van Natten vs. Vradenburgh, 1829-1830

5: Williams vs. Priest, 1829-1830

Miscellaneous cases

Folder 6: 1825-1837
 7: 1828
 8: 1829-1830
 9: 1831
 10: 1832, 1834
 11: 1835
 12: 1836
 13: 1839, 1843, and undated
 14: Unidentified cases, undated

Box 24

VII. Adam Fralick

Adam Fralick Subseries A: Correspondence

Folder 1: 1856
 2: Jan.-Feb. 1857
 3: Mar.-May 1857

Adam Fralick Subseries B: Orders, accounts and receipts

Folder 4: 1855-1856
 5: 1857, and undated

IX. Miscellaneous correspondence and receipts

Folder 6: Correspondence, 1776-1798
 7: Correspondence, 1801-1838
 *Note: Some of these letters may relate to Burwell case files.
 8: James Murdock letters received, 1793-1801
 9: Receipts, 1821-1851

X. Little Falls, N.Y. records

Folder 10: Petitions to the trustees of Little Falls, 1825-1834
 11: Resolutions, complaints, subscriptions, resignations from board of trustees, lists of town committee members, lists of persons vaccinated against smallpox, information about killing dogs, and other material, 1810-1825

- 12: Memoranda of serving notices, 1832-1833; laws concerning sidewalks and licenses, undated
- 13: Applications to keep groceries, 1831-1833, and undated
- 14: Town assessments and tax receipts, 1832-1834
- 15: Accounts and receipts, 1827-1834

XI. Herkimer County Democratic-Republican Young Men

- Folder 16: Minutes of meetings in various towns, 28 June 1834